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Maintenance Space

The Political Authority of Garbage in Kampala, Uganda

by Jacob Doherty

In the name of cleaning up Kampala's political institutions and public space, a new municipal body, the Kampala Capital City Authority (KCCA), was established in 2010, replacing an elected city council with a presidentially appointed executive director. To legitimize its highly contested and explicitly antipolitical authority, the KCCA made garbage collection and beautification its top priority, promising to deliver routine urban repair and mundane maintenance work in exchange for suspending the norms of electoral democracy in Uganda's capital city. This article argues that the exceptional space of the repair site is paradigmatic of municipal power over the city as a whole. Based on an ethnography of municipal waste management infrastructure and an analysis of the KCCA's visual account of itself, it elaborates the concept of maintenance space to theorize how the entanglement of sovereign and governmental power produces the city as a particular kind of territory. Because the work of maintenance and repair is continuous and ongoing, maintenance space endures. Far from a short-lived inconvenience, its exception becomes the foundational norm of technocratic authority. Not limited to Kampala, the enduring exception of maintenance space, I conclude, identifies a widespread mode of urban spatial production and depoliticization.

When he assumed office in May 2011, Erias Lukwago, the newly elected populist lord mayor of Kampala, Uganda, found that his position had been rendered purely ceremonial. Municipal power—control over programs, policy, planning, and most importantly, the budget—had been passed to Jennifer Musisi, the executive director of the Kampala Capital City Authority (KCCA). A newly formed body, the KCCA was charged with governing Kampala, Uganda's capital, most populous city, and center of the national economy. Appointed by President Yoweri Museveni, rather than elected by popular vote, the executive director's mandate was to transform municipal government and bring order to a city perceived to be perennially wracked by political conflict and overwhelmed by chaotic informal infrastructures. Commenting on the establishment of the new authority, President Museveni urged:

Don't make Kampala a battle-field but keep it clean. Musisi came to rescue the situation of the City that had got out of hands of the Local Government who had failed to manage its cleanliness, potholes and public health for 25 years. (Uganda Media Centre 2016)

Musisi (2013) observed that, prior to the KCCA, "Government and all Ugandans were constantly embarrassed about the state of the city" (1). The KCCA thus set out to repair the

image of the city and transform the nation's feelings about its capital.

Lord Mayor Lukwago was issued a high-end SUV and asked to play along. He refused. He instructed traders loyal to him to boycott the license fees being collected by the KCCA and, in October 2012, took his challenge to court and to the streets. After a lengthy set of hearings surrounded by controversy, Lukwago was removed from office, charged with obstructing government work and inciting violence against municipal employees. Further protests followed his impeachment, echoing his earlier call, as part of the 2011 "Walk-to-Work" protest movement, to make the city ungovernable (Branch and Mampilly 2015:113–150). Lukwago was ultimately reinstated by the High Court although he did not play a part in any KCCA activities from 2013 until after his reelection in February 2016.¹

Meanwhile, the KCCA went about its work, seeking to legitimize itself and establish its unelected authority in a highly

1. Since March 2013, Lukwago has been involved in a protracted, and ongoing, legal struggle with the KCCA, which sought his impeachment. Prior to his November 25, 2013, impeachment, the High Court issued an injunction against the impeachment vote. KCCA officials proceeded anyway, physically blocking Lukwago's lawyer from delivering the court order to the hearing, where they voted 29–3 to impeach. This impeachment was annulled days later and Lukwago was reinstated, although the attorney general appealed this decision. In March 2014, a judge barred Lukwago from carrying out his duties as mayor pending the AG's appeal. Lukwago was reelected in February 2016, and, as of June 2016, was publicly attempting to reconcile with Executive Director Musisi and establish a new cooperative relationship with the KCCA.

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contentious political environment. Garbage became the primary source of the KCCA's authority. Of all the issues facing the city—potholed roads and traffic congestion, wetland encroachment by industries and residents, slum flooding, housing and health care shortages, air quality, food security, and, the overriding concern for the urban population, unemployment—in its first year of operation the KCCA made solid waste management and beautification its first priority. The Kampala Capital City Authority founded its authority by identifying and tackling a crisis of cleanliness that extended from the city's streets, drainage channels, and dump sites, to the corrupted core of the previous urban administration, the Kampala City Council. If garbage epitomized the inefficiency and failure of the Kampala City Council, then cleaning up the city and urban governance itself would be the hallmark of the new administration. Under the KCCA, Kampala would be governed as a technical object to be known, planned, and acted upon by a new cadre of technocratic experts who would, in contradistinction to the politicized "battlefield" sought by the mayor, clean the city and bring about a new regime of service delivery, infrastructural improvement, and municipal maintenance.

How was this antidemocratic reform legitimized?² What kind of city did the KCCA envisage and how was this transformation initiated in spite of widespread skepticism, suspicion, and protest? Based on two years of ethnographic fieldwork conducted between 2010 and 2014 on Kampala's waste streams, this article explores the banality of power and state-formation in contemporary Kampala. One of the most unspectacular and mundane aspects of urban governance, waste management offers a privileged view into the establishment of the KCCA, how it legitimized its authority in the face of protest, and how it has pursued its project of antipolitical urban renewal.

Criticizing the dramatic extent to which maintenance and routine infrastructural labor are undervalued by a culture that fetishizes growth, innovation, and entrepreneurialism, historians Andrew Russell and Lee Vinsel (2016) urge readers to "Hail the Maintainers" who make systems run. Likewise, discard scholars have argued for the vital role played by unheralded municipal workers in making urban life possible (Nagel 2014).³ Because infrastructure is central to the establishment and exercise of state and corporate power (Cowen 2014; Easter-

ling 2014), and infrastructural repair is situated within, and productive of, changing social relations of production, control, and belonging, it is insufficient to simply "hail" maintenance and necessary to understand its spatial and political effects. Recent ethnographic work on African infrastructures, for example, has examined the construction and historical maintenance of large-scale sociotechnical systems to theorize changes in modes of governance and power, be it the role of the transnational oil companies in defining development (Leonard 2016) and exacerbating social differences between those on or off the grid (Appel 2012), the importance of the technical devices in calibrating the meanings of democracy, citizenship, and freedom in the context of racialized processes of privatization (Von Schnitzler 2008), or the way huge megaprojects provide a collective temporal orientation and political horizon that constitutes national publics (Miescher 2014). Waste management infrastructure is especially relevant to these debates because it is so intensely laborious (Fredericks 2014), making apparent the extent to which infrastructures are predicated on routine work in addition to the materiality of pipes, wires, dams, and concrete. Moreover, because it is so centrally about maintenance (as opposed to extraction or service delivery), waste management reveals the amount of work and technical power required to simply reproduce daily life. Cleaning is, as Mary Douglas (1966) argued, a form of world-making; therefore, rather than hail maintenance, I ask what worlds it makes and maintains.

Routine maintenance emerged as the critical field in which the KCCA's highly contested governmental restructuring was legitimized and a new municipal government authorized. The KCCA enacts not just discrete work sites, but the city as a whole as a particular kind of territory. Conceptually, exploring the actual practices of maintenance and urban cleaning highlights the extent to which urban governmentality relies upon and, in turn, constitutes, sovereign power, in the topology of power I label "maintenance space." Empirically, attending to the techniques of maintenance illustrates the "how" of territory. It shows that territory is a project, something "brought into being" (Roy and Crane 2015) and always incomplete. Rather than assuming the state as a stable, preexisting entity that simply acts upon equally stable and preexisting territory,⁴ I suggest that cleaning is not just world-making, but state-making.

In the following section I elaborate the concept of maintenance space, drawing on the anthropology of infrastructure to complicate Foucault's schematic distinction between sovereign power exercised over territory and governmental power exercised over populations. Section two analyzes the exercise of municipal power by describing a KCCA cleaning campaign dubbed "Keep Kampala Clean" and the upgrade of a major transport hub. These municipal projects illustrate that making maintenance space entails making waste (in this case, of existing popular livelihoods) in addition to cleaning up garbage. Section three

2. In this article I use the term "democracy" in the limited sense in which it is understood by the Ugandan government, international institutions, and the majority of those I met and interviewed in Kampala, referring to the institutions of electoral representation, the protection of civil rights such as free speech, freedom of the press, and freedom of assembly, as well as the constitutional rule of law.

3. Similarly, recent work in the anthropology of consumption has called attention to repair as a historically and materially variable set of practices through which commodities' "social lives" are extended (Gregson, Metcalfe, and Crewe 2009; Reno 2009), demonstrating that consumption takes place alongside and through practices of care, maintenance, alteration, and reinvestment, illustrating the entanglement of the consumption and (re)production of material goods (Doron 2012; Jackson 2014).

4. This position emerges from the methodologies proposed in ethnographic approaches to states and sovereignty (Bonilla 2017; Hansen and Stepputat 2001; Mitchell 1991).

details the suite of explicitly antipolitical institutional reforms initiated by the KCCA to clean up the city and repair urban administration itself, highlighting the ways in which maintenance space is established by the exclusion of politics. Based on analysis of the KCCA's visual account of itself on social media, section four examines when, how, and to what effect normally invisible routine maintenance and mundane municipal infrastructure become visible, suggesting that the KCCA sought to make maintenance space visible in order to mark a moment of historical rupture, a new epoch in urban life in Kampala.

The Power of Maintenance

Maintenance space identifies the particular form of spatial production and territorialization through which the KCCA establishes and legitimizes its authority. Michel Foucault famously distinguished between sovereignty (power violently exerted over a territory) and governmentality (constitutive of populations through biopolitical intervention in vital processes). In his *Security, Territory, Population* lectures (Foucault 2007), he outlines these distinctions schematically—"sovereignty is exercised within the borders of a territory, discipline is exercised on the bodies of individuals, and security is exercised over a whole population" (11)—before noting that this rigid delineation "is not the point" and does not "hold together" (11; see Collier 2009). Pointing out that all three forms of power have ways of organizing space, he introduces the idea of milieu to describe how "apparatuses of security" problematize space. Rather than acting directly on bodies, they intervene at a distance by "making possible, guaranteeing, and ensuring circulations: the circulation of people, merchandise, and air" (Foucault 2007:29). Town planning is the key illustration of this, as regulation targets the width of streets, the density of houses, and the flow of sewers to foster biosecurity through proper circulation. This governmental concern with circulation stands opposed to sovereign spatial projects to establish "limits and frontiers" (29). While these are useful ideal-typical distinctions, they become more muddled in the routine operations of municipal power. For instance, although the KCCA is interested in expanding the spatial borders of its authority (establishing Kampala as a metropolitan region by incorporating neighboring districts and towns), it seeks to do so not in the name of constructing a sovereign boundary, but to better manage the circulations of people, goods, vehicles, and waste in order to improve urban health, aesthetics, and economic development.

As such, governmentality does not replace sovereignty in a linear evolution or epochal shift. Rather, the two operate in tandem as modes of power. To account for this contemporaneity, Stephen Collier (2009) proposes a topological, rather than epochal, analytic that does not look to reduce power relations to a single, totalizing, functionally coherent form, be it sovereignty, discipline, or biopower. Instead, topologies describe the ways in which different ways of exercising power are assembled and configured in response to particular historical conjunctures. Collier uses the term "configurational principle" to

identify the underlying logic "that determines how heterogeneous elements—techniques, institutional arrangements, material forms, and other technologies of power—are taken up and recombined" (80). Examples of configuration principles include key terms like "preparedness," "sustainability," "good governance," or "entrepreneurship." The emphasis here is on processes of assembling rather than systematicity; through this processual approach, a topological analysis sidesteps the more functionalist, reductive, and totalizing readings of Foucault. Maintenance, I suggest, is a configurational principle that organizes the assembly of diverse spatial techniques of power in the management of the city as a whole.

As a configurational principle, maintenance assembles a range of spatial techniques that can be glossed as either "order" or "cleanliness." These were the two key terms in the KCCA's official discourse around urban transformation. While they are often entwined in calls to action that summon a clean and orderly future, they signal two sets of practices and interpellate distinct publics. Techniques like eviction, demolition, and bans on certain forms of economic activity can be understood as forms of sovereign power. Predicated on violence, they say "no" to particular forms of life in order to create urban "order." Other techniques, including routine municipal work (garbage collection, filling in potholes, replacing water pipes, sweeping roads, and clearing storm drains) as well as moralized modes of responsabilization, municipal self-representation, planning, permitting, and zoning, can be understood as governmental. Productive of new spaces and subjects, they foster certain forms of life in order to achieve urban "cleanliness." Maintenance space is the territorial effect of a topology of power that combines these heterogeneous techniques—ranging from routine acts of repair to spectacular moments of space-clearing demolition, from governmental cleaning to sovereign ordering—in order to transform the urban milieu. Because it is a process of assembly, it is never stable, total, or complete, but a provisional and partial outcome of government that is constantly in formation and open to contestation.

Through maintenance work in general, and waste management in particular, subaltern groups are brought into the ambit of the governmental state, and urban governance comes to be present in the most intimate domains of urban life. As Joshua Reno's (2015) overview of the anthropology of waste management reveals, waste's sheer ubiquity and the number of different subjects participating in disposal processes ensure that regulating waste—even if this remains an always-incomplete fantasy of mastery—means regulating vast swaths of social life. In postcolonial Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, for example, even as the municipal government failed to grapple with the mounting burden of waste, calls for better waste management reproduced an exclusionary vision of urban life that criminalized practices such as urban farming, scavenging, house building, and informal retail (Brownell 2014). By contrast, in the context of municipal abandonment and in the shadows of the failures of the developmental state in Tema, Ghana, Brenda Chalfin (2017) describes a toilet facility that is public but not state-run

where the intimate acts of bodily self-care are constitutive of surprising forms of urban belonging. Here, an experimental “commonwealth of waste” is being built literally from the toilets up by a pioneering entrepreneur who accrues wealth in people via the disposal of waste (Chalfin 2017). In Kampala, establishing urban order remained a contentious issue for populations including street vendors, motorcycle taxi drivers, customers who avail themselves of the city’s widespread informal sector, and residents of unplanned low-income neighborhoods (combined, these demographics make up a vast proportion of the urban population). By contrast, cleaning Kampala provided the KCCA with a broad constituency and a straightforward moral position. Cleaning thus laundered the project of ordering, one that, as in many other African cities, was highly contested and unpopular (Doherty 2017; Hansen and Vaa 2004). In this environment, garbage served as a material, practical, and symbolic foundation for the KCCA’s authority, signaling its mandate and its ambitions as well as the infrastructural terrain upon which its legitimacy would be established.

The objective of routine maintenance is to ensure infrastructural continuity: to guarantee that pipes flow, roads are passable, and waste does not pile up. In practice, ensuring continuity requires disruption. Maintenance work involves temporary closure of space while repairs are conducted. Maintenance asks the public to “pardon our dust” while work is in progress, to “bear with the short-lived inconveniences” cited in figures 1 and 2, to excuse momentary dirtiness in the name of future cleanliness, temporary congestion in the name of future circulation. Establishing these exceptional zones can entail not only closure, but also demolition. Clearing the way for repair, maintenance work in Kampala often involves tearing down unlicensed structures, removing antiquated infrastructures, and otherwise clearing space to establish a tabula rasa upon which an upgraded urban order can be established. This kind of temporarily exceptional, out-of-bounds, under-construction

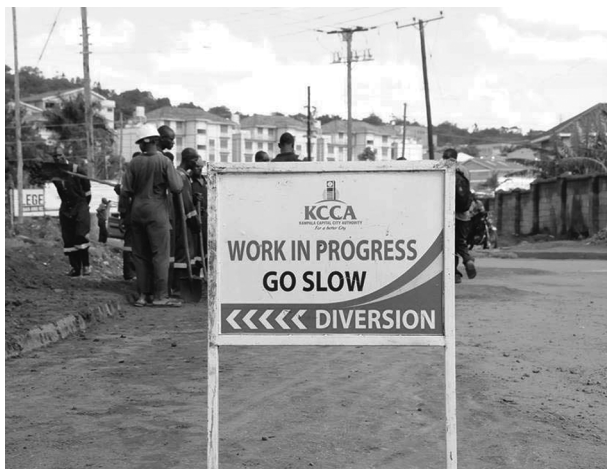


Figure 1. “Work in Progress,” posted November 18, 2014, by the Kampala Capital City Authority (KCCA). A color version of this figure is available online.



Figure 2. “Short-Lived Inconveniences,” posted December 11, 2015, by the Kampala Capital City Authority (KCCA). A color version of this figure is available online.

space that suspends the norm in order to allow its reproduction is paradigmatic of maintenance space. Because the KCCA enacts the city as a whole, not just discrete worksites, as maintenance space, this paradigm can be used to understand the spatial practices producing and governing territory across Kampala. The city itself becomes, administratively, a space of exception.

The indefinite suspension of democratic representation initiated by the KCCA (the replacement of an elected mayor by an appointed executive director) is the institutional equivalent of the “work-in-progress” sign asking residents to excuse an exceptional rupture in ordinary circulation in the name of conducting repairs—in this case, to the nation’s moral standing and reputation. This exception becomes the rule, however, because repair is continuous, banal, and everyday, a permanent and constitutive feature of urban life, not an occasional aberration. Combining the moral authority of cleaning with the exertion of sovereign power to displace existing urban forms of life constituted as waste, the routines and disciplines of waste management exemplify the KCCA’s enactment of the city as maintenance space: a technical object and work-in-progress whose “short-lived inconveniences” are merely the painful, and painfully needed, cost of an Edenic future.

Exercising Municipal Power

The entanglement of two modalities of municipal power—sovereign ordering and governmental cleaning—through the configurational principle of maintenance was especially visible in the KCCA’s monthly cleaning exercises named “Keep Kampala Clean.” In conjunction with local leaders, the KCCA’s five divisional waste management supervisors identified an area to

target and coordinated volunteers from partner organizations, local elected officials, teams of trash-truck drivers and loaders, and enforcement officers who met on the final Saturday of the month to sweep roads, gather garbage, clear drains, and otherwise clean up.

A typical cleanup I attended in Nakawa Division targeted the vicinity of a bustling commercial strip where vendors were selling basic foodstuffs from tarps and kiosks in front of a row of more established retailers working in brick and concrete shops. As we waited for a trash truck to arrive, Francis Malinga, the KCCA waste management supervisor for this area, told me that “the difficulty here is that people are rebellious: you can tell them how to handle their waste but they cannot listen. They are too stubborn!” He went on to recount having come to blows with residents who refused to bring their trash out to KCCA trucks when they passed on the main roads, but continued to dump their rubbish on the same roadsides under the cover of darkness. Vendors, traders, and residents, he complained, believe that since they pay taxes they have no obligation to participate in waste management, seeing it as the KCCA’s job. The informal vendors especially irked Malinga: “They make the place so dirty, yet they reject our message of cleanliness!” Malinga identified these recalcitrant attitudes as stubborn residual traces of village life. This reading of noncompliance with municipal policy as a sign of backwardness is predicated on the assumption that the urban poor are recent urban arrivals, and the concomitant unthinkability of the urban poor as political actors able to withdraw their labor from the KCCA’s project of urban transformation.

As Malinga and I talked, trash trucks arrived and loaders began to gather up the heaps of garbage that volunteers had gathered around the area. Vendors hurriedly packed up their wares, packing potatoes and matooke into gunny sacks, folding fruits up into tarps, and heaping fish into plastic buckets to keep them from being impounded or discarded when they



Figure 3. “Market Clearance,” taken October 26, 2013, by the author. A color version of this figure is available online.



Figure 4. “Market Rubble,” taken October 26, 2013, by the author. A color version of this figure is available online.

fled, fearing arrest. The market emptied quickly, although vendors had had to leave behind the heavier and more unwieldy wooden tables, kiosks, display stands, and crates that made up the market’s material infrastructure. Once the loaders had gathered all the area’s trash, they turned their attention to these structures. Working with enforcement officers, they dismantled vendors’ kiosks and threw them into the trash trucks (figs. 3 and 4). “Sanitation covers everything,” Malinga explained. “When peace fails we have to use force!” While environmental and other NGOs regularly organize similar cleaning events, the KCCA’s Keep Kampala Clean campaign broadens the scope of the project of cleaning, using garbage loaders and sanitation teams to enforce trade order. Using garbage loaders to displace vendors and literally sending their kiosks to the landfill, these KCCA cleanups directly enact informal vending and its small-scale infrastructures as garbage. In practice, cleaning and ordering—governmental care and sovereign authority—become indistinct, emerging as a unified set of techniques and infrastructures that produces and manages disposability. There were no protests. Vendors sought to escape with what they could so that, as Malinga commented, “they can return tomorrow.” Acknowledging the forms of “quiet encroachment” (Bayat 2010) through which urban space is produced in Kampala, Malinga was resigned to the fact that despite its best efforts, the KCCA’s technocratic authority could not entirely remake the city in its own image.

Waste is thus not simply a preexisting technical problem to be solved by the good governance of a new municipal authority, but the constant material effect of processes of urban renewal. The foundational authority of waste management involves not just taking garbage away, but making waste. The 2012 demolition and reconstruction of one of the city’s major transport hubs illustrate this generative dynamic of waste production and waste management.

The New Taxi Park is one of a cluster of transportation hubs concentrated in downtown Kampala, located in the crowded

streets between the central business district and Owino Market (the heart of the city's informal wholesale, retail, and small-scale manufacturing economies, and a major center of the city's recycling economy). This part of Kampala is always congested, gridlocked in part due to the density of taxi and bus parks (staging areas where minibuses and megabuses wait to fill up with passengers to ferry across Kampala, Uganda, and East Africa) that attract a steady stream onto the area's narrow roads. Full of passengers, taxi parks were also thriving commercial centers. Until 2012, in addition to hosting 700 traders operating "lock-up shops" (concrete structures used as small restaurants, clothing shops, or electronics stalls selling phones, airtime, and access to phone chargers) the New Taxi Park was crosscut by ambulant vendors selling water, soda, candy, and snacks to eat, newspapers and books to pass the time, and handkerchiefs to wipe away the sweat that comes while waiting for the final person to fill crowded 14-seater taxis.

In September 2012, the KCCA began work to revamp the New Taxi Park. The evening news showed dramatic scenes of police evicting traders from their shops, of municipal workers demolishing structures with sledgehammers and bulldozers, of taxi drivers protesting that they had nowhere to go and that their customers would not find them. Just over a year later, President Museveni opened the refurbished park. Paved with smooth tarmac and marked by freshly painted parking bays, the new park was a radical contrast to the dust, mud, and potholes it replaced. The new park had no lock-ups though, and food vendors were strictly prohibited as the KCCA sought to implement clear distinctions between retail space and transportation infrastructure.

While the park was under construction, a corrugated iron fence went up around the site. On one side of the fence was maintenance space: the cleared-out tabula rasa upon which the city's new infrastructure was being constructed. On the other side were piles of rubble. This rubble, the concrete debris produced by the demolition of the lock-ups, stayed uncollected on the pavements and was soon taken over by traders. A lively secondhand clothes market popped up literally atop the material remainder of the demolished space. This episode dramatizes the dynamics of urban development in Kampala, and the centrality of waste to these processes. It begins with the municipal power to evict and demolish in order to remake the city in its own image, a vision of orderly circulation, discrete zoning, and infrastructural improvement. This development lays waste to existing structures and economies, generating material and social debris. This form of wasting is often described as creative destruction (Schumpeter 1976), but, as Gastón Gordillo (2014) observes, this concept recognizes destruction "only to present it as ultimately creative, thereby depoliticizing it" (80) through the redemptive logics of progress and production. Gordillo proposes "destructive creation" as a conceptual alternative that identifies the value produced through ruination that "disintegrates not just matter but the conditions of sociality" (81). Because destructive creation makes multiple new spaces, however, Kampala's urban development is fragmentary rather than

linear. Always in formation rather than totalizing, making maintenance space remakes its outside. The debris that is a by-product of the production of maintenance space becomes a new space. Waste-lands become open, if only temporarily and precariously, to be captured by the displaced, who build new commercial infrastructures and enact their own visions of urban development and futurity.

"For a Better City"

The KCCA did not come into being in a vacuum of authority. On the contrary, establishing its authority entailed destructive creation, making waste of existing institutions and regimes of municipal power. Like their counterparts in other African cities, Ugandan opposition parties that have had little success winning significant representation in Parliament, let alone control over the executive branch, have found great success in urban areas by deploying populist rhetoric (Resnick 2014). Since 1998, Kampala has been represented and ruled by politicians from (or associated with) the opposition Democratic Party. Urban governance in this period has been characterized by open confrontation between city hall and the state house over decision-making and budgetary control (Goodfellow 2010). Supporters of the president and the National Resistance Movement (NRM) accuse Kampala's elected representatives of being corrupt and incompetent rabble-rousing populists who appeal to and manipulate the urban masses to advance their own political careers, but have no real vision for the city. Supporters of the opposition accuse the president of deliberately sabotaging urban governance by withholding budgetary support and tacitly sanctioning disorderly development through unplanned land sales, allowing well-connected developers to ignore municipal and environmental regulations, and playing populist himself when convenient. This strategy, they argue, has prevented the opposition from gaining the political capital and legitimacy they would accrue by successfully governing and developing the city. In this view, opposition mayors' failures to develop the city once in power have to do with the ruling party's unwillingness to provide sufficient budgetary support to enact reforms or carry out their policies in any meaningful manner (Gore and Muwanga 2014; Lambright 2014).⁵ In its modesty, the understated slogan of the newly formed KCCA, "For a Better City," offers a comment on the failure of these previous urban regimes.

It is no coincidence that the KCCA emerged in 2011, in the wake of dramatic protests across urban Uganda questioning the legitimacy of the national government following the 2011 presidential elections. As in the post-Second World War colonial context, contemporary development projects can be understood as a means of responding to urban political unrest

5. Disrepair is not inevitability. In Kampala, it results from decades of donor-driven policy, structured by the imagined need to counter "urban-bias" through structural adjustment plans that dismantled municipal budgets (Alexander 2012; Semboja and Therkildsen 1995).

and of legitimizing the antidemocratic exercise of sovereign state power (Cooper 2002; Thompson 2003).⁶ An ally of four-time presidential candidate Col. Dr. Kiiza Besigye, a broadly supported figure in Kampala, Lord Mayor Lukwago was hugely popular among urban youth, informal vendors, and *boda boda* (motorcycle taxi) drivers because he was seen as a thorn in the president's side and had a reputation for intervening on behalf of the urban poor in courts and in Parliament when reforms threatened their presence in the city (Sserunjogi 2011). In the words of Phillip Mukiibi, a key interlocutor throughout my fieldwork who was an informal plastic trader and a staunch Lukwago supporter, "He represents us poor people, especially the youth who are ever frustrated by Museveni. And he always defends us." For the KCCA, however, Lukwago was the embodiment of political disorder, the obstacle to development. In a 2015 interview, for example, Jennifer Musisi stated that "Lukwago was a problem to us. . . . There has been a lot of development in KCCA during the last two years of his absence from office" (Etukuri and Waiswa 2015), identifying Lukwago himself as the problem and juxtaposing development and politics.

This distinction between development and politics is emic; it is a central categorical difference organizing statecraft in Kampala.⁷ In the KCCA's public relations, as well as in the stated objectives of many KCCA workers I interviewed, "antipolitics" and "rendering technical" (Li 2007) were not distant scholarly analytics but explicit, nearly verbatim, policy goals. For many municipal workers, urban development required getting rid of politics, seeing Kampala's residents not as citizen-voters, but as

a recipients of, or obstacles to, services such as waste management. The distinction between the technical and the political shapes the identities and professional aspirations of KCCA employees and leaders and takes physical and institutional form in the organization of municipal offices. At Rubaga Division Headquarters, for example, the technical and political wings of the government are divided into the east and west wings of the building.

To clean up city hall, the newly formed KCCA took to the streets where it sought to establish its authority by provisioning basic services (with waste management as the first priority) and by restoring a sense of sanity and order to the city through the enforcement of trade order ordinances. The labor of maintenance would remake the city and remake the perception of municipal government. While campaigns to establish urban order—evicting and banning street vendors from the Central Business District, for example—proved controversial, cleanliness had a nearly universal appeal across the class spectrum. Even Musisi's harshest critics had to acknowledge her efforts to deal with Kampala's garbage problem. The promise of cleanliness and improved waste management extended the KCCA's constituency beyond the middle class to incorporate those historically excluded from sanitary modernity, municipal service delivery, and waste infrastructure. And who wouldn't prefer passing a bed of flowers to a heap of garbage? Beautification—landscaping roundabouts and road medians—was the KCCA's most immediately visible effort to clean the city (fig. 5), along with a short-lived campaign to arrest litterers and post their pictures on an online "wall of shame."⁸

The KCCA was also busy behind the scenes. They set out to regulate the burgeoning private waste-management sector through licensing, environmental impact evaluations, data collection at the municipal landfill, and monitoring of routine practices and equipment quality. They attempted to develop and coordinate a system of assigned zones in which different companies would be authorized to operate, although this effort proved untenable. The KCCA also sought to attract more foreign direct investment into the city's waste sector, organizing conferences and courting companies that could develop waste-to-energy projects at the municipal landfill as well as developing and operating a new landfill. Most significantly for the day-to-day management of the city's trash, the KCCA brought in an entirely new staff in the Directorate of Public Health Services and Environment, including five new solid-waste management supervisors charged with planning, coordinating, and overseeing garbage collection in each of the city's five divisions.⁹

8. When I interviewed the KCCA's press officer, he explained that they had ended this campaign because it was causing too much bad feeling between the authority and "our taxpayers" who did not appreciate being publicly shamed (see also Otagi 2011; Waiswa 2011).

9. This was part of a comprehensive cleanup of the municipal administration itself via a complete staff overhaul. Every KCC worker had their contract terminated and had to reapply for a position in the new authority.

6. In fact, struggles over political authority in colonial Kampala were also staged on the terrain of maintenance. Colonial Kampala was a segregated city, inhabited by British merchants and colonial officers as well as Indian traders and laborers. The neighboring Kibuga, or "native town," was home to the *kabaka* (the ruler of the Buganda Kingdom) and to a large African migrant population from around East Africa (Parkin 1969; Southall and Gutkind 1957). Cleanliness, hygiene, and sanitation became sites of struggle as the Kampala Municipal Council sought to extend sanitary authority over the Kibuga, meeting both cooperation and resistance from the *Kabaka* and his prime minister. Sanitary measures in the 1920s and 1930s included using forced labor to clear drains, burning huts, and hunting rats, primarily with the goal of combating plague and malaria. Although the outcome of these efforts was often appreciated, following the orders of colonial medical officers was seen as compromising the king's sovereignty over the Kibuga, while carrying them out made Baganda authorities unpopular among their followers (those being evicted from unsanitary huts) upon whose labor they relied (Gutkind 1963:122–140; Vaughan 1991).

7. Emic though it may be, this distinction is far from unique to Kampala. Partha Chatterjee (2004; see also Roy 2009) has theorized the way post-colonial developmental states have sought legitimacy through progressive improvements in the well-being of their populations rather than through the deliberative democratic participation of citizens. Africanists have detailed the ways in which such governmentalizing processes have been elaborated in dramatically uneven ways through multi-scalar transnational networks of governance as much as through nation-states and in relation to discrete populations (defined, e.g., by disease) rather than national citizenries (Benton 2015; Grewal and Bernal 2014).



Figure 5. “Beautification,” posted March 17, 2014, by the Kampala Capital City Authority. A color version of this figure is available online.

Young, university-educated and ambitious women and men, these supervisors were dedicated public servants committed to improving collection rates, extending service to underserved neighborhoods, and cracking down on illegal littering. In interviews, they explained their roles in explicitly antipolitical terms, describing themselves as working in the “technical” wing of the municipal government and listing the myriad difficulties that “politics” pose to their work. One supervisor explained that when the KCCA tried to fine a homeowner for having open pipes connecting their toilets to storm drains, to arrest an informal garbage collector for dumping in a wetland, or to demolish unsanitary market stalls, elected officials intervened. Populist politicians seek to protect their voters, she said, attempting to garner votes by interfering with municipal policies and ordinances designed to bring order to the city. In the context of an autocratic developmental state,¹⁰ urban politicians’ role can thus be understood as the work of buffering the tensions between municipal policy and the urban population, gaining political capital by delivering services to constituents

10. President Yoweri Museveni’s Uganda has been characterized as a hybrid of democratic and authoritarian regime, combining technocratic and militaristic modes of rule (Goodfellow and Titeca 2012; Sjogren 2013; Tripp 2010). Museveni’s unique political genius has been in balancing internal and international politics, materially and discursively gatekeeping. The patronage networks of an expanding state and security apparatus, as well as the rewards given to commercial elites through the privatization of state assets, have allowed him to co-opt and preempt both political dissent and armed resistance by bringing potential enemies into the NRM fold through positions in the proliferation of newly created districts or as commanders of new military and police forces (Green 2010; Mwenda and Tangri 2005). His position as a key US geopolitical ally in the “war on terror” ensures a steady stream of military aid as well as development funds, while his fealty to IMF structural adjustment plans famously earned him a reputation as a member of the so-called “new generation of African leaders” (Oloka-Onyango 2004).

while protecting them from what is broadly seen as predatory regulation and displacement by a high-handed technocratic government.

The KCCA’s technical workers, on the other hand, explicitly saw depoliticization as vital for getting their work done. This related to an ambivalent attitude toward the urban poor. Supervisors were earnestly dedicated to improving services and living conditions for residents of the city’s slums and expressed their desires to help develop the city in broad and inclusive terms. Yet, residents of poor neighborhoods were figured as homogenous communities, obstacles to the elaboration of maintenance space who needed to be educated about the dangers of waste and configured as proper users of the city’s constantly changing waste infrastructures (Woolgar 1991). Through their planning discourse and technocratic practices, supervisors encountered and enacted the urban poor as a distant population, another technical object to be measured and supervised, at best consulted, at worst punished (Brown 2015). Solid waste supervisors wanted to help, but were quick to invoke common behavioralist tropes and generalize about the backward, wasteful, and unhygienic habits of “these poor people” who frustrated their efforts to bring cleanliness and order to “those low-income communities.”

This distance was reinforced by the organization of work. Supervisors’ jobs consisted of managing parish-level managers who worked with elected officials and other leaders to identify community needs as well as finding ways to convince residents to participate in KCCA waste collection efforts and cease engaging in unsanitary behaviors. Supervisors oversaw the hiring of hundreds of new “casuals,” uncontracted workers paid UGX5,000 a day (US\$2) to load garbage trucks, desilt drains, and sweep streets. Waste management is enormously labor intensive (Fredericks 2014); in addition to this large casual labor force, the work of gathering and disposing waste extended to the women and children of low-income neighborhoods and the domestic servants of elite areas.¹¹ Coordinating this work, the central task of supervisors’ daily routine involved going “into the field” to conduct two- to three-hour inspection tours of their division, following the routes where trash trucks had been assigned for the morning to check that collection had, in fact, taken place. Constantly on the phone with trash-truck drivers and parish managers, they found kinks in the municipal waste stream (trucks’ mechanical problems, conflicts between neighbors, wage and other labor disputes raised by loaders) and delegated teams to straighten them out to keep the waste stream flowing. They identified new unauthorized dump sites and stationed locals as “scouts” in the area to dissuade their neighbors from dumping and reporting those that did to the authority. They located “backlogs”—long-term dump sites in residential areas and wetland fringes where decades of uncollected rubbish had accumulated—and petitioned

11. I explore this work, as well as the work of the extensive informal waste economy, in more detail in my forthcoming book *Waste Worlds: Kampala’s Infrastructures of Cleanliness and Disposability*.

the KCCA to send diggers and backhoes to clear them out. They documented their efforts in reports, letters, and before-and-after photographs. Overall, supervisors encountered the population primarily through their aggregate material traces and spatial effects.

By all accounts these efforts proved hugely successful. The KCCA reported that in its first year it had nearly doubled garbage collection rates in the city from 16,000 to 33,500 tons monthly, and even the authority's sternest critics acknowledged that the city looked and felt cleaner (KCCA 2014; Mukisa 2014; Office of the Auditor General 2010). A fleet of 12 new trash trucks circulating through the city, brightly branded with the KCCA's colors and new logo, made visible this systemic restructuring of the city's waste management infrastructure and publicized the KCCA's investment in routine repair. How did the KCCA narrate and represent its project of urban transformation to the public? What work did these accounts of itself do in the constitution of its contested authority (Sharma and Gupta 2006)?

When Infrastructure Goes Public

Managing appearances was critical to the KCCA's coproduction of space and municipal authority. The KCCA relied on techniques of visual representation and digital publicity to narrate urban transformation and create an account of itself (Butler 2005). In addition to "seeing like a state" (Scott 1998) through the optics of planning and forms of policy-knowledge production, the KCCA was invested in repairing the image of the city and projecting a certain image of itself, of looking like a state.¹² Looking like a state entails managing how municipal power appears to its subjects. As I describe below, by publicizing photos of waste management infrastructure and its mundane practices of maintenance and repair, the KCCA projects an image of itself as a purely technocratic enterprise committed to the banal and everyday work of urban governance, an image deliberately juxtaposed to the disruptive picture of politics embodied in the figure of the lord mayor.

Infrastructure scholars have focused on two moments of infrastructural visibility: inauguration and failure. Moments of inauguration highlight the overwhelming and awe-inspiring aesthetic of the sublime or the spectacle, observing how infrastructure is entangled in ideologies of modernization, progress, and nationalism. Moments of failure turn analysis toward

materiality and technical specificities. Historians of liberal governmentality have argued that infrastructure's invisibility is a central aspect of its role in the maintenance of "rule by freedom," the material basis for the production of freely choosing liberal subjects (Joyce 2003). Echoing Heidegger (1962:95–102), moments of infrastructural failure and interruption are theorized as events that disclose the materiality of infrastructures, bringing the technical details and physical properties of infrastructures into the center of public debate (Barry 2013; Graham 2010). These moments, the sublime inauguration and the material ruin, are cast as opposites, held apart as the two temporal poles of infrastructure's life course. Except in the minds of FEMA planners and Hollywood directors paid to imagine catastrophic collapse (Lakoff and Collier 2010; Page 2008), in between these eventful moments, the "infra"—the below—of infrastructure dominates and the networked systems that sustain urban life are meant to remain out of sight and out of mind. Moments of failure and interruption also reveal and reproduce inequalities of access and the radically divergent means by which distinct class groups attempt to remain connected to municipal services. This emphasis on interruption, however, is predicated on the Eurocentric assumption that infrastructures regularly function as intended, an assumption that does not hold across much of the postcolonial urban world (McFarlane 2010). Highlighting the socially constructed and politically laden nature of the designation "crisis," for the majority of the world's urban population infrastructural interruption constitutes the normal, rather than exceptional, condition of life.

In his discussion of the colonial sublime, Brian Larkin (2008) contrasts the invisibility of infrastructure within "advanced liberal" societies with the spectacle made of infrastructure by colonial states. These spectacles, he argues, simultaneously dramatize colonial difference, demonstrating the gap between colonizers and colonized, while promising to deliver the modernizing development that will bridge that gap. According to Larkin, infrastructure was made visible within the terms of the colonial exchange whereby sovereignty was traded for technological progress. Spectacular displays marked the inauguration of dams, railroads, and electrification in order to overwhelm the senses of Britain's colonial subjects and build a sense of attachment to the futures they promised. Following independence, postcolonial African governments relied on the spectacle of infrastructure to knit together new nation-states and set them on the path of modernization (Bloom, Miescher, and Manuh 2014). Infrastructure and its inaugural visibility have thus long been central to the ways in which colonial and postcolonial states seek legitimacy, and as such they bear a heavy burden of representation.

The KCCA's account of itself is doing something different. Infrastructure becomes visible not through ribbon-cuttings, awe-inspiring spectacles, or catastrophic failures. In addition to press coverage, cleanup events, and the visible presence of its trucks, loaders, and enforcement on city streets, social media was a critical venue in which the KCCA publicized its infrastructural projects and achievements. On its Facebook, Twitter,

12. Steven Pierce (2006) makes the argument, of colonial Northern Nigeria, that although classic state projects of "seeing" (in his case a revenue survey) often failed to produce the knowledge they claimed to, they nonetheless enabled the government to look like a state. He contends that this disjuncture—a government that looked like a state but could not see like one—is at the root of state weakness, the population's cynical attitude toward the state as dysfunctional, and the concomitant moral economy of corruption. The KCCA's social media visibility is an effort to make the administration look like a state that is, specifically, functional, strong, and not corrupt.

and Instagram accounts¹³ the KCCA shares photos of ongoing and completed work repairing roads, clearing drains, and managing solid waste as well as images promoting outreach programs in schools, the annual City Carnival, awards bestowed on the authority, the overseas visits of the executive director, the accomplishments of KCCA sports teams, and warnings urging the public to cease littering, to stop purchasing goods from street vendors, or to be patient during works in progress. Mixed in with inspirational quotes and holiday greetings, these images portray a hardworking, technically minded, and progressively oriented authority competently carrying out its vision of urban transformation. This portrayal is based on a surprising way of making infrastructure visible, not as spectacular accomplishment, but as a banal object of technical intervention: the city represented and enacted as maintenance space (fig. 6).

Ugandans are accustomed to hearing the lavish promises of large-scale projects that are meant to bring development and secure a bright future. After decades of such promises, however, many see that the emperor has no clothes—the clothes, in this case, being maintenance. The sublime effect is ephemeral and fleeting as proximity and intimacy with once-novel technologies and infrastructures erode their capacity to inspire overwhelming awe, while time makes visible the effects of neglect and disrepair. The KCCA's account of itself and its work therefore relies on much more mundane affects than the sublime to constitute its authority. In the KCCA's visual repertoire, trash trucks replace trains, filled-in potholes replace hydroelectric dams, and parking lots replace train tracks. One counterexample is instructive (fig. 7).

In May 2014, a story broke in the Ugandan press that the KCCA was planning to install a cable car as part of its efforts to transform transportation infrastructure in the city. A few days later, the KCCA confirmed this rumor with a post on its Facebook feed that showed a photograph of a cable car.¹⁴ Rather than inspiring the awe of the dynamic sublime (Nye 1994), this representation of a possible future for Kampala elicited a torrent of mockery. "What drug have you smoked this morning?" inquired one man. "What is going to power them? If it is UMEME [the notoriously unreliable national power company] then we should brace ourselves to hang in space so often. I Hope the cables are not stolen while we hang up there," posted another commenter. "I will not ride unless they come with parachutes," wrote another. These posters point to the KCCA's questionable ability to assemble and sustain the

13. As of November 2017, the KCCA had 46,644 followers on Facebook, 134,000 followers on Twitter, and 3,759 on Instagram. The content shared across these platforms is almost entirely the same. I choose to focus on the KCCA's Facebook page because it provides a more capacious and discretely organized space for public commentary than Instagram or Twitter.

14. An image of a cable car also features on the cover of the "Strategic Plan 2014/15-2018/19," which lists cable cars as part of the KCCA's plan to revamp urban transportation infrastructure (KCCA 2014).



Figure 6. "Kafumbe Mukasa Road, Then and Now," posted April 25, 2014, by the Kampala Capital City Authority (KCCA). A color version of this figure is available online.

resources needed to properly run and maintain such futuristic infrastructure. Held up against the realities of Kampala's infrastructural present, the very idea becomes ridiculous: "The biggest joke I have ever heard! In a country where people openly defecate???"

This imagery is in stark contrast to the bulk of the images posted to the KCCA's Facebook account. Rather than attempting to produce the infrastructural sublime, a task that the population is too skeptical to accept, the KCCA has used other techniques to disrupt everyday modes of perception. It does so not through photographs that inspire awe, but by illustrating the production of the everyday itself by documenting banal forms of maintenance, repair, and upgrade. These images ground the new authority's legitimacy not in its production of a virtual spectacular, but in its attention to the everyday, and ordinarily invisible, practices of government. As with the colonial sublime, these representations are part of an exchange: in exchange for its antipolitical and undemocratic form of technocratic authority, the KCCA delivers maintenance, not spectacle. The production of the everyday, in this configuration, itself constitutes a rupture in historical experience, disrupting residents' resignation to urban neglect (figs. 8 and 9).

Depicting the mundane work of urban repair, maintenance, upkeep, and upgrading, these photos show newly installed trash cans, street sweepers working in their newly acquired reflector jackets, trash trucks doing their rounds to collect municipal waste. They show ongoing road repairs, drainage channels being cleared of silt, and gardeners tending to green spaces. Both the



Figure 7. "Cable Cars in Kampala," posted June 4, 2014, by the Kampala Capital City Authority (KCCA). A color version of this figure is available online.

literal content and the overall tone of the photos is "work in progress," the city under maintenance. The dominant aesthetic is the flat naturalist realism that characterizes technocratic reportage. I observed several KCCA employees taking photos during the course of their jobs and asked them about it. In each instance they were slightly baffled, responding that they just wanted to capture the scene for their reports. They were slightly concerned with composition, to ensure that a clear road or a targeted dump site is centrally in frame, but did not spend much time or thought on how the photos looked, taking them quickly from eye level.¹⁵ Stripped of the artistic elements that could produce the sublime, the photos are meant to be purely objective and technical representations of the KCCA's work.

Maintenance space is made through destructive creation, clearing space to make room for the new urban order. This entails mass demolition of small kiosks (as described during cleaning exercises), market stalls, unlicensed shops, and other "semipermanent" structures, as well as evicting more itinerant street vendors, hawkers, and others who make a living in spaces zoned for pure circulation. The KCCA does not hide this destructive creation, posting photographs of "voluntary demolitions" on its Facebook feed. These images depict and normalize the population's consent to destructive creation. These scenes are rendered commensurable with the other work

15. In 2014 this aesthetic changed and a more professional set of images—bearing the hallmarks a more deliberate use of photographic techniques of composition, focus, lighting, and color and of higher quality cameras—began to populate the KCCA's social media feeds. These newer images and videos consistently use an extremely shallow depth of field that brings the subject (the KCCA's repair work) into focus while representing urban life as a blurry backdrop.

depicted in the feed; they are represented as another form of beneficent urban governance, part of the banal work of maintenance, repair, and beautification. Bulldozing shops becomes just like sweeping up dust. In the stream of images the KCCA transmits, shops and markets appear alongside clogged drains and illegal dump sites as technical problems to be solved through municipal cleaning and prevented, in future, by good behavior on the part of the population (fig. 10).

In Kampala, infrastructure becomes visible differently because maintenance and repair are the basis for KCCA's legitimacy. Infrastructure is publicized, and public-making, in order to signal a moment of historical rupture, to dramatize the difference between technocratic power and populist politics. The KCCA's visual strategy positions itself in opposition to the failed regimes of previous urban administrations under the rule of elected members of opposition parties. Banal municipal labor is presented as a novelty, and held up in contrast to the disruptive and riotous behavior of the city's elected mayor. This contrast is dramatized in "then and now" photographs that depict the material accomplishments of the new urban authority alongside the disrepair that characterized the city they inherited (see fig. 6).

A Facebook feed is a somewhat open space, and citizens have taken advantage of the space opened by the KCCA to speak up and represent the city of their own everyday experiences. These online protests take different forms. In a September 2014 post, the KCCA urged citizens to take on the responsibility of better garbage disposal, arguing that littering is the cause of clogged drains and urban flooding. "Desist from the vice [throwing garbage] in drainage channels/roads," the KCCA insisted. Citizens used the post as an occasion to redistribute blame and responsibility, pointing to poor planning, inadequate enforcement, and changes to municipal waste collection policy that have made people less likely to receive services. Some commuters take on the KCCA at its own repre-



Figure 8. "New Bins," posted May 5, 2014, by the Kampala Capital City Authority (KCCA). A color version of this figure is available online.



Figure 9. “Sanitation Week,” posted March 26, 2014, by the Kampala Capital City Authority. A color version of this figure is available online.

sentational game, using the Facebook stream to contest the image of smooth circulation and beautification presented by the municipality and to demand the extension of municipal services. One photo, captioned simply “totally blocked,” depicts the ways in which the city fails to accommodate its citizens with disabilities. It shows a man in a wheelchair trapped by a row of yellow bollards and unable to cross the street. Similar posts register failures of service delivery or use photos to depict infrastructural neglect. Elsewhere, another poster borrows from KCCA’s realist objective aesthetic to represent the city as he sees it: still in need of repair. He shows that the terms of the exchange by which the KCCA seeks to legitimize its antipolitical governance is literally full of holes, showing an open sewer with the manhole cover missing, posing a threat to pedestrians and their property.

While these replies to the KCCA’s posts critiqued the extent of the KCCA’s infrastructural improvements and demanded more services and more maintenance, others contested the KCCA’s authority at a more foundational level. The jokes about the cable car can be understood as a form of defacement (Taussig 1999), naming the public secret (that the state does not have the infrastructural capacity to deliver promised good) whose disavowal is enacted in the KCCA’s visual rhetoric. Other commenters heckled the municipality, trolling the KCCA’s technical posts with demands for the restoration of the lord mayor, posting the ontological statement “*waali omuloodi*” (there is a lord mayor) in order to make present their erased political voice and to politicize the KCCA’s efforts to render urban governance purely technical.

These protests were not limited to social media. In November 2013, when Lord Mayor Lukwago’s appeal against impeachment was in court, his supporters took out their anger on the KCCA, attacking the unpopular enforcement officers as well as garbage collectors as they worked. In response, on November 28, 2013, the day Lukwago was ordered to be re-

instated by the Court of Appeals, the KCCA itself went on strike, stating that:

Since March 2013, we have been caught as pawns in the tensions of the political push and shove of the City; we have been embroiled in separate, lengthy and tiresome processes before various organs and therefore have hardly had time to do our work of delivering services to the City. The above, coupled with the ensuing political controversies and violent reactions by the public on matters relating to the office of the Lord Mayor have created a hostile working environment that has put the lives of our workers in danger. (KCCA 2013)

The KCCA decided to cease all service delivery until it could ensure the security of its employees. Rhetorically, their statement depicts the authority as a victim of the city’s politics. Rather than describing government as a space in which politics can be carried out, or the KCCA as itself political actor, the statement disavows the disenfranchisement that sustains the KCCA as a purely technical operator. The KCCA publicized these attacks and the effects of the interruption in service on social media, posting photos of injured workers as well as vendors crowding the now unpaved downtown pavements. While regular services did resume—the strike only lasted one day as the minister for Kampala ordered the municipality back to work (Mpage 2013)—KCCA officials at the division level were nervous about attracting attention. From November 2013 to the conclusion of my fieldwork in July 2014, I sought to attend a cleanup event in Rubaga Division but none were scheduled. One of the KCCA partners in this campaign (the leader of a community-based organization contracted to raise awareness in the buildup to these events who was personally close with the town clerk) explained that Rubaga, home to the city’s largest slum and to staunch Buganda loyalists who had been at the forefront of riots in 2007, 2009, and 2010, was too politicized and the KCCA feared that if they tried to do a cleanup, rioters would attack and burn its expensive garbage



Figure 10. “Voluntary Compliance and Destructive Creation,” posted September 8, 2014, by the Kampala Capital City Authority. A color version of this figure is available online.



Figure 11. “Why Is Kampala Flooding?” posted August 5, 2016, by the Kampala Capital City Authority (KCCA). A color version of this figure is available online.

trucks. In addition to quiet encroachment, then, protests also mark the limits the KCCA’s spatial power, interrupting the production and publicizing of maintenance space (fig. 11).

Conclusion

Kampala is experiencing a dramatic state of flux, transformation, and explosive growth. In such a context, what can we learn from attending to maintenance, a set of techniques and practices of meant to ensure stability and continuity? This article has argued that Kampala’s exceptional political status, considered by the NRM government to be too important to be subject to the democratic procedures that exist—at least in principle—in the rest of the country, emerges under the sign of “work in progress.” Repair has emerged as the critical terrain in which this exception is legitimized. Work in progress is meant to signify a rupture in the history of Kampala, to mark the beginning of a new era and the repair of municipal authority. While the prior regime, the democratically elected populist Kampala City Council run by politicians, may have collected votes, they did not collect garbage. By getting on with the dirty work of waste management, the KCCA founded its authority on garbage, securing its legitimacy through the routine technical work of maintenance.

The KCCA was brought into being through the technologies of tear gas and trash trucks, ordering and cleaning. Like the new Kampala, the KCCA itself is constructed through acts of banal repair and destructive creation, making waste of existing spaces, economies, and institutions in order to clear ground for the elaboration of new forms of municipal power, infrastructure, and citizenship. Citizenship in maintenance space is defined not in terms of political rights or electoral representation, but as a form of responsible conduct. It is exemplified not by engaging in political speech, for example, but by throwing trash in a designated bin, participating in the everyday project of urban maintenance. The KCCA uses infrastructural publicity to document and represent maintenance space, seeking to ground their authority, not in the infrastructural sublime, but in the production of more everyday aesthetics like beauty, order, and cleanliness, as well as in the production of the everyday itself.

Far from unique to Kampala, instances of depoliticizing urban administration in the name of maintenance, upgrade, and temporary exceptionality are transforming urban space around the world. From the city managers appointed to administer Flint, Michigan, to the planning bodies authorized to develop land and infrastructure for sporting mega-events in South Africa and Brazil, ostensibly short-lived exceptions have radical, far-reaching, and enduring consequences on cities and citizenship. In the immediate post–Cold War period, Uganda was feted as being at the vanguard of a new wave of democracy sweeping the continent. The years since have seen a transformation in the discourse around democracy in the region as entrenched regimes no longer rely on elections and open political pluralism as primary modes of legitimation. In Rwanda, legitimacy is located in remarkable statistics around life expectancy and maternal and infant health. In Ethiopia, legitimacy is in staggering rates of economic growth. In Tanzania, legitimacy comes from taking on corruption and transnational mining firms. In Kampala, legitimacy lies in the waste-collection rate. Garbage has emerged as a vital substance for political authority. Ethnographically attending to the practices and politics of maintenance illuminates the everyday coproduction of urban space and municipal power and makes visible the wasted worlds surplus to municipally sanctioned visions of urban futures. The political challenge will be to develop a theory and practice of democracy that does not fetishize the electoral. It remains open what alternate political affordances garbage might offer these projects.

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Comments

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While not always identified as such, maintenance has become a central subject in history of technology and science and technology studies in Africa. In this literature, maintenance is often described as a vital and creative act in both colonial and postcolonial settings. African radio operators, auto mechanics, and iron forgers, who likely never received formal technological or mechanical training and spend much of their time performing everyday forms of maintenance, nonetheless require finding creative ways to keep things running long past their prescribed lives (see work by Emma Park and Joshua Grace, as well as Jennifer Hart's 2017 book). This is a welcome and crucial opening of what counts as history of technology and who counts as an expert. But with this article, Jacob Doherty necessarily complicates the scholarly tendency to valorize maintenance as not only a creative act but also a subversive one.¹⁶ Here, maintenance is not individuals tinkering with things, but states tinkering with territory. Here, maintenance is a practice of not just "world-making" but "state-making," and the space designated by the state for maintenance frequently becomes a way of claiming territory in a way that is "always incomplete" and thus justifies an ongoing, never-ending right to intervention.

Indeed, maintenance was frequently a core justification for the continued existence of the colonial state and the order it perpetually promised to deliver. As Frantz Fanon (1963) wrote in *Wretched of the Earth*:

The Settler makes history; his life is an epoch, an Odyssey. He is the absolute beginning: "This land was created by us"; he is the unceasing cause: "If we leave, all is lost and the country will go back to the Middle Ages." Over against him torpid creatures, wasted by fevers, obsessed by ancestral customs, form an almost inorganic background for the innovating dynamism of the colonial mercantilism. (51)

Maintenance is the less attractive twin of "progress," whose very banality is used to buttress claims of innovation, improvement, and ordering.

To illustrate Fanon's point, one need only look at the ways in which settler communities across Africa cloaked their racist

fears of decolonization in worries over the future of infrastructure. The South African author Stuart Cloete, reporting in 1960 for *Life* magazine on the end of colonial rule in the Belgian Congo, penned an article titled, "End of Era with Threat of the Jungle Taking Over." When Cloete asked the general of the Belgian Congo what would happen after independence:

He replied that grass would grow in the streets. The buildings may last 10 years . . . because we have built well, but after that the jungle will close in; it will take over what we have wrested from it.

Cloete later notes that in the Congo, "mold grows on shoes overnight. Only unremitting supervision can arrest these elemental forces, can hold them back in the endless war against the terrible fecundity of the forest." The threat of infrastructural recidivism acted first as justification and later as nostalgia for colonial rule. While in this context, "maintenance" might have been saving streets from becoming jungles, it is a sentiment found in all corners of colonial knowledge production about Africa: that African morality would slink back to barbarism without the tending of Christian missions, that African bodies and homes would be claimed by insipid environments and traditions without a modern regimen of hygiene and domesticity (Burke 1992; Newell 2015). Indeed, maintenance has long stood as the bulwark against the "Heart of Darkness."

In postcolonial Africa, maintenance has also had a powerful political life, and this power stems from its necessary political corollary, dirt. Dirt was a "social fact," writes Alicia Decker, in Idi Amin's Uganda. Used as a signifier of neglect, disorder, and incompetence, dirt lives beyond its biological composition as something to be being pointed out along with those responsible for its proliferation (Brownell 2014). But while communities might daily discuss their frustrations with dirt and waste, it does not become a social fact until noticed by those with the authority to order it gone. Dirt thus exists in "the volatile temporalities of urban governance that can swing erratically between long periods of municipal neglect or forbearance to intense periods of scrutiny and eradication" (Brownell, forthcoming). As Doherty points out, maintenance has a similar syncopated existence. The public understands its value as the promise of continuity, but disruption is incumbent. Maintenance lives in the contradiction of constantly intervening into the rhythms of the city in order to make sure things run smoothly.

The political power of maintenance thus depends on the continued production of dirt. If there is something to clean up, a politician (or a depoliticized body such as the Kampala Capital City Authority) can argue that they are the ones to finally clean it up. In this way, the unfulfilled promise of infrastructure and maintenance are sustaining tropes of African politics. One current example can be found scrolling through Nairobi Governor Mike Sonko's Instagram account. Here, you can see pictures of young men picking up trash with the hashtag #letsfixnairobi. Wearing red jumpsuits emblazoned with the words Team Governor Sonko in yellow letters, the

16. For a thoughtful word of caution on valorizing creativity in the face of scarcity, see Serlin 2017:97.

new governor's privately funded "rescue team" has been criticized as a publicity stunt that is taking over the work of permanent city employees. The rescue team seems to operate with the same cognitive dissonance that Doherty describes in Kampala: under the auspices of creating a more responsive urban authority, Sonko's "rescue team" insists that the work of maintenance must be done outside the decrepit bureaucracy of municipal politics. Within this "maintenance space" they claim they are doing something worthy of exception from the processes of "politics as usual."

It is no mistake then that "cleaning up" has echoes of the postcolonial military coup, also deployed in the name of restoring order and stability outside of politics. A preponderance of campaigns across postcolonial Africa to restore order and eliminate "dirt" have utilized a language of military intervention. Examples include Zimbabwe's "Operation Murambatsvina" (Operation Move the Rubbish) started in 2005, which removed more than 700,000 people from their homes and neighborhoods. In the 1980s Nigeria's military dictator General Babangida also implemented a "War Against Indiscipline" to address a broad spectrum of perceived waste and corruption, including a 24-hour hotline for reporting "sanitary nuisances" (May 1984). President Nyerere in Tanzania in the 1970s and 1980s enacted a spate of "operations" to clean up Dar es Salaam and root out corruption and economic sabotage. The ruling party's Youth League formed "people's militias" that cleaned the city not just of trash but also helped police urban morality and belonging.

If conditions of scarcity have produced ingenious maintainers and tinkerers in the postcolonial era, Doherty's article reminds scholars that it has also led to undemocratic crack-downs on dirt in the name of maintenance. Frequently, these militarized maintenance campaigns also making cleaning cities the compulsory and time-consuming responsibility of the citizens who need infrastructure the most.

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Jacob Doherty's article, "Maintenance Space," is an innovative account of new governing practices in Kampala that are secured in the space of order and cleanliness. It brings the increasingly important fields of discard and infrastructure studies to bear on understandings of urban government and citizenship. In doing so, it joins with a set of important recent interventions on the urban politics of infrastructure in Africa (e.g., Appel 2012; Chalfin 2017; Fredericks 2018; Mains 2012; Von Schnitzler 2016) that are resculpting how we understand city making in "ordinary cities" (Robinson 2006) anywhere.

Doherty lays out how a new "epoch of urban life" has taken root in Kampala that is centered on visible forms of ordering

and cleaning through garbage collection and beautification projects. In an effort to elide the messy populist politics of the mayor, the new technocratic government body, the KCCA, instead consolidates its power and territory through the production of maintenance space. This explicit antipolitics represents a veritable power- and land-grab via discard and its infrastructure. Doherty's analysis privileges the material over the symbolic as the basis of power. And yet, his account eludes the shortcomings of some new materialist thinking with regard to conceptions of the political. Where some materialist approaches to politics can float in an abstract, philosophical mode, Doherty's account zeroes in on the specific stakes of this material practice for local democratic politics in Kampala. New urban relations are forged in the space of the mundane and ostensibly neutral material practices of maintaining urban infrastructure. Fixing/ordering potholes, garbage piles, and other encumbering elements (including people) in the urban space becomes the key objective of government, in effect stifling other conceptions of the political and forms of claims-making by citizens. Success in governing is measured on an aesthetic register of beauty and cleanliness. The messiness of democratic practice gets eclipsed in the interest of the technocratic achievement of material order.

It is no surprise that waste is at the center of urban transformation in Kampala. Doherty's research contributes to a wider sphere of discard scholarship illuminating how waste and waste management are at the center of urban projects of modernity (Moore 2012; Reno 2015). As a key index of value, waste and acts of dirtying or cleaning take on special significance. As Doherty makes clear, it is the association of waste and cleaning with the mundane that allows a whole new agenda of governing to take form. And yet, beneath the supposedly apolitical veil of maintaining and beautifying the city lies a fraught set of practices that produce and manage disposability. As we see in myriad cases across the continent and beyond, those people and spaces deemed too messy for the modern city, such as street vendors, hawkers, and others "cluttering" the urban space, become the targets of urban "cleaning." Doherty turns these ordering practices on their head to instead highlight how they are, in fact, themselves forms of wasting. Demolition in the interest of beautifying Kampala might be seen as a form of aesthetic governmentality (Ghertner 2015) through which certain spaces and people are disposed of in order to secure the city for more "productive" activities. Doherty focuses on the removal of encumbering features of the urban space directly implicated in the improvement of garbage collection and movement in the city, but one also has to wonder if these logics penetrate into wider decisions regarding housing and economic activities. Also important is the question of how the specific materiality of the different kinds of trash (household garbage, messy people, nonconforming practices) matters for the particular forms of ordering they unleash.

The article also makes important contributions to the burgeoning critical literature on infrastructures, which has upended the idea of infrastructure as simply a technical support

structure. While much of the literature focuses on the political import of the production of spectacular infrastructures or their failure, the real innovation here is in showing the power of the decidedly not spectacular—for “the KCCA delivers maintenance, not spectacle.” The much-ignored space of repair is instead placed at the center of city-making (see Graham and Thrift 2007). In place of dams, bridges, and the other trappings of modernity, residents come to expect orderly streets, filled-in potholes, and trimmed hedges. As they reshape urban practice, these newly maintained features of the urban landscape themselves become new components of the urban infrastructure (see De Boeck 2012). A key piece of this new formula is the power of labor as an essential element of infrastructure. Though Doherty focuses on the importance of the visibility of maintenance, I would argue that it is not just its visibility but its labor intensity that matters. It is the incessant, disciplinary toil of visibly laboring bodies that marks this new epoch. A focus on toil demands an interrogation of who, specifically, is doing this dirty work and with what implications. Across myriad cultural contexts, it is understood that waste labor carries powerful corporeal, status, and even spiritual burdens (e.g., Samson 2009), so the question is how waste labor is structured and with what effects for residents of Kampala. How, moreover, is maintenance space and its lively infrastructure enacted differentially across the city’s fragmented urban space?

From Beirut to Dakar to Mexico City, garbage politics have come to the forefront of how we think about urban politics (e.g., Fredericks 2018; McFarlane and Silver 2016; Moore 2009). But more often than not, these take shape around unruly strategies of strikes and other waste-based protests. The significance here lies in the biopolitical work of ordering responsible conduct. Doherty’s exciting intervention is essential reading for those who strive to understand the city, and clearly the mundane needs to come much more to the center of our urban scholarly agendas.

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Doherty’s investigation of the politics of maintenance, technocracy, and authoritarianism comes at a pivotal moment in contemporary African urbanism in which cities are increasingly the staging grounds for the justification of antidemocratic projects. From Equatorial Guinea’s “white elephants” (Appel 2012), to the oil-boom redevelopment of Luanda (Soares de Oliveira 2015), aesthetic spectacles of the world-city have become a favored means of propping up regime legitimacy. Doherty shifts the emphasis of such discussions away from a focus on spectacle, in which politics is aestheticized in the form of large projects, to the realm of the seemingly mundane—cleaning, repair, maintenance—to illustrate how cultivated de-

sires for order and cleanliness facilitate the disintegration of democratically orientated institutions and possibilities.

The vehicle for the undermining of democratic futures is the KCCA, an institution created in 2011 to manage Uganda’s capital city, unseating the elected Kampala City Council. The KCCA claimed that only through the elimination of “politics” would it be possible to create the city that Ugandans deserved. Its technocratic focus became maintenance and cleaning, legitimizing its actions through the “beautification” of Kampala. Similarly to Benjamin’s (1968) understanding of the destructive core of progress, Doherty argues that rather than equating maintenance with repair, maintenance actually became the grounds for significant acts of violence and destruction. The existing urban environment had to disappear to give birth to a better future. Maintenance was therefore not simply about restoration but about ruination, not only of the built environment but of democracy, as “politics” became portrayed as the obstacle to the realization of a clean, livable city.

The KCCA’s destructive actions were enabled by the production of an “emic” distinction between “development and politics” as “a central categorical difference organizing statecraft in Kampala.” The former city council was dismissed as having been unable to create the city that residents deserved because it was too riven with politics. Similarly, the dismissal of complaints about KCCA actions was justified by the argument that politics prevented the realization of the future city. Conflating democratic behavior with “politics” became a means of delegitimizing opposition and plurality. The above distinction is increasingly structuring political possibilities across the African continent, with supporters, for instance, of Kagame and Magufuli dismissing critics of these leaders’ civil and human rights records by focusing on achievements in health, urban cleanliness, and anticorruption initiatives. The implication is, of course, that rights get in the way of these latter accomplishments. This article raises a key question, then: if rights and elections are no longer of concern to many, what are the objects of political contention and desire?

It is in tracking the dismantling of the democratic sphere through the built environment that this paper makes its most significant contribution. While at one level, this seems like a familiar story—the mobilization of seemingly technocratic, “nonpolitical” institutions and programs that, in fact, are highly political in their processes and outcomes—it is the link between these institutions, the actual transformation of urban space, and the imaginaries of aesthetic desire that enables a window into how democratic openings are being shut down in Uganda and other countries. Clean streets and urban parks are the vehicle for dismissing democratic claim-making. The legitimacy of the KCCA ultimately rests after all not only on its appeal to the technocratic, but also on its ability to convince Ugandans that its methods will bring into being a specific material and aesthetic future. This is done through appealing to the visual, tactile, and olfactory capacities of urban residents. It is the intersection of the aesthetic imaginary and the technocratic that facilitates the unmaking of democracy. This intersection echoes

more general trends in the politics of urban development in the Global South in which hegemonic versions of beauty are increasingly not only being internalized by those who stand to lose by these visions (Harms 2012), but begin to become the basis for legal decision-making (Ghertner 2015) and the performance of state power, something which Doherty also alludes to when he highlights that “looking like a state” is central to the efficacy of the KCCA’s appeal. It would have been interesting to delve further into the politics of this shared imagined material and aesthetic future.

The article ultimately challenges readers to dwell on what the bases of authoritarian imaginations are. In fact, in some sense, it seems the KCCA can only build legitimacy because the capacity to imagine worlds different from the one it promises is either weak or difficult to find arenas for. The “resistances” to the KCCA’s actions, for instance, witnessed through snide comments and jokes made about the images it posted on its social media profiles, did not dispute the desired future, just that the KCCA would get the city there. If politics now lies in the realm of materiality and the language of futurity, one that is seemingly so thoroughly embraced by all, where is there a space for contestation and alternative imaginations? Ultimately, where is the space for democracy? The findings of the article force ethnographers of African politics to begin to think more carefully about where and how democratic demands are being expressed outside of recognizable registers of rights and institutions in a moment where authoritarian futures appear to have captured the political imagination.

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Most African capital cities are riddled with numerous issues in terms of governance, as recent literature has shown. This is partly due to the uneasy cohabitation in the same territory between national and local authorities (Bekker and Therborn 2011). At the heart of this problem is the question of democracy itself, or the perception from most states in Africa that the democratic process is always messy, and that for things to work properly, administrative capacity might be transferred into the hands of nonelected bodies. The kinds of political arrangements that stem from this situation provide the background for Doherty’s article: a rich and theoretically sophisticated ethnographic account that engages with the ways in which African cities really work. The article examines waste management in Kampala, Uganda, more specifically through the action of the KCCA, a nonelected administrative body, which de facto runs the city and has hailed garbage collection and the city’s beautification as its main objectives.

Avoiding some of the most obvious ways in which garbage collection has been rendered in urban studies, such as the ecological metabolic framework, Doherty rather engages with questions of power and politics, or antipolitics. Echoing Ferguson (1994) and Foucault (2007), Doherty takes pains to distinguish sovereign power from governmentality. He does not share the view that the latter supersedes the former, but rather makes the case that both forms of power go hand in hand. However, such a gesture does not prevent him from ascribing functions to each of these two categories. He argues, for instance, that evictions and demolitions are in the realm of sovereign power. However, it can be argued that for the most part evictions and demolitions in most of Africa are not subsumed under the arbitrary will of the sovereign but are indirectly imposed on people based on concerns about the rationalization and distribution of space (planning), which fall under the category of governmentality.

However, the inclination to explain waste management through power and infrastructure leaves out an important dimension of the ways in which African cities are managed. For the KCCA does not come into being in a vacuum of authority. There is not much context in the article to understand the Kampala unruliness. Central governments’ getting involved in local affairs through commissions is very common in Africa, and such arrangements, on permanent or ad hoc basis, may be found in other parts of Africa, namely Lagos, Addis Ababa, or Luanda. But in the case of Kampala it comes with specific contours. Part of the problem is that Kampala is the homeland of the Buganda Kingdom, which produces the Ugandan state, in many regards, as a sort of tenant in the city (Goodfellow 2010). Therefore, the emergence of KCCA not only stems from the imperative to dodge the process of popular deliberation but has also been motivated by the need to confront “ethnic” modes of the production of space.

Such a view would provide a corrective for Foucault analyses of the relationship between governmentality and sovereign power. Sovereign power, contrary to what Doherty seems to argue, is not just about violence and tyranny. It is also about care. Foucault’s (2007) main concern in *Security, Territory, Population* is less about the division of labor between governmentality and sovereign power and more about the ways in which elements of the pastoral power, the care for groups or populations, have been incorporated in the procedures and calculations of the modern state through governmentality.

Such an understanding would help the author to account for the relationship between power and space in Kampala. Doherty does a terrifically good job when it comes to explaining how space is maintained. But he leaves outside of his consideration the modes in which space is produced. For instance, Doherty discusses the phenomenology of garbage itself, or the idea that what may be considered garbage for the KCCA may be seen as something else by other agents. However, what lacks here is an account of the social relations, the modes of association, that preside over usages of space.

The relevance of such a critique is not simply to bring something that is not in the article. The point I am trying to raise concerns the most important mandate of anthropology, which is missing from a great deal of what has been recently written on Africa. Anthropologists were used to offering other ways for explaining social action. Against the viewpoint that Africans did not have History, anthropologists were able to show that social practices were embedded in History. Nowadays, it seems that theory is doing this part. Part of the problem, as Quayson (2014) has discussed, comes from the preoccupation with the “everydayness,” which renders every social process in Africa “partial” or “provisional,” terms that one may find in Doherty’s article. The point I am trying to make here is not that there is no such thing as the ephemeral and provisional. My point is simply that an overdetermination of these aspects may obfuscate any understanding of deep structures and permanence. An explanation of the latent forces that provide alternative ways to organize social space could be a corrective to this tendency.

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Modernization fixates on trash. Modernizers dream of organizing matter that resists their vision of sanitation, functionality, and order. Rural migrants’ impromptu garbage heaps and messy hawker bazaars sully the proper city. The metropolitan desire for order that we encounter in Jacob Doherty’s article, “Maintenance Space: The Political Authority of Garbage in Kampala, Uganda,” drives technocratic ambitions around the world.

Doherty’s ethnographic account of the role of trash in Ugandan urban governance invites reflection on the relation between this specific postcolonial context and the global nature of a modernizing agenda. He explores a rich moment when the question “who throws out the trash?” became highly politicized in the capital city of Kampala. The conflict over city cleanup emerged when a body appointed by the national government assumed the powers of an elected city government personified in the figure of its lord mayor. His article works through possible ways to frame this political difference. From Mary Douglas, we understand that what makes dirt dirty is a symbolic schema for what belongs where, rather than some inherent dirtiness. Douglas’ understanding of symbolic boundaries lends itself to critical analyses of the logic underpinning political regimes: who is out of place? Considering the salience of Foucault’s categories of governance, Doherty finds that his observations of actually existing politics of waste management in this East African city do merit the label of either govern-

mentality or sovereignty, a conclusion that researchers working outside of the West will find familiar. Doherty turns the lens of critiques of development to Kampala’s struggle for authority over waste. He reads the unelected technocratic bureaucracy as antipolitical, concluding that an antipolitics is displacing a true politics (or the political) in the form of the elected lord mayor, or elected authority in general.

This battle plays out in a theater of waste. “Maintenance Space” provides an example of the anthropology of infrastructure, demonstrating that power uses cleanup for legitimacy. Under the banner of “please pardon our appearance,” that is, a state of exception, the Capital City Authority disperses poor residents and disrupts the downtown’s informal economy, at least for a day or two. To create order, authorities destroy. To clean, they create rubble. At the same time, Doherty shows, residents repurpose the new waste or new edge spaces to their own purposes. Beyond ephemeral moments of destruction, Kampala officials’ beautification efforts center on routinization by implementing regular street sweeping and trash pickup. In so doing, the authorities, antipolitical forces for Doherty, produce the city as a maintenance space.

Much discussion about infrastructure considers its visibility or invisibility as important features. A forgotten gentle hum in the background—that is the presumed ideal for infrastructure. As many critics have shown, this ideal of smoothly operating background infrastructure does not characterize actually existing infrastructural systems in most of the world. Nor is invisibility the aim of infrastructural projects showcasing displays of technological prowess: for example, colonial installations aiming to inspire awe or monumental structures championed by development states and international aid. While Kampala’s waste-management program does not present a seamless invisibility, its visibility lacks the grandeur of the colossal dam. Doherty describes the character of Kampala’s urban infrastructural program as quotidian. The notion of everyday maintenance best applies when authorities leaves behind the destructive sledgehammer for standard-issue brooms and bins. In Kampala, such maintenance has not yet achieved the banal form of everyday suggested by the term quotidian. As this article shows, routinized maintenance remains novel enough to merit posts on social media.

Indeed, urban authorities do not just supervise the movement of garbage, they also talk about it, and apparently quite a lot. Kampala’s cleanup is achieved not only materially through destruction and maintenance but also discursively through publicity. In close readings of Capital City Authority’s self-representations, Doherty shows how infrastructure operates as a trope in a discourse about Kampala’s identity. His sensitive interpretations of banal imagery consider such formal properties as the depth of field and composition in the unreflective worksite snapshot. By controlling trash, materially and symbolically, an unelected urban agency legitimates its authority. Hence, Doherty argues, Kampala’s cleanup depoliticizes governance of the city.

Doherty's rich material exceeds this schema of apolitical and political modes of governance, which may be more resonant with the critical scholarship on development than with the ethnographic situation itself. For example, Doherty portrays the drive for order and cleanliness as a "municipal desire," that is, as a reflection of the will to supplant politics with technocratic engineering, a drive that seems itself to be facet of power. And we do see citizens' resistance to the execution of beautification projects. Textually, resistance appears in graffiti and digital commentary, while embodied forms include physical attacks on city workers. Naturally, hawkers avoid the confiscation of their supplies. Yet his robust ethnographic material complicates his association of desires for order with apolitical governance. If Doherty found that "cleanliness had a nearly universal appeal across the class spectrum," then denizens of the capital share the "municipal desire" for their city to be more orderly. In which case, do the politics of beautifying Kampala lie in the dreams or its discourses, with the locus of authority or with the fulfillment of these plans?

In accounts Doherty relays here, Kampalans' chief complaints do not target the overall desires of the Capital City Authority nor its nonelectoral formation, with some exceptions. Rather, most critique is directed at failures to realize what was promised. Rules are not adequately enforced; services do not reach everyone; disabled people lack access—and look at this crater of a pothole! Pointing to failures at urban improvement, rather than shrugging them off with wry resignation, suggests the desire of Kampala's residents for cleanliness to be achieved.

"There has never been a moment when everyone possessed such public goods as access to clean water and efficient sewers," the literary scholar Bruce Robbins (2007:31) notes in "The Smell of Infrastructure." Beyond its role as signs of political legitimacy, sanitation is an everyday concern and therefore also an object of political struggle for ordinary people. It is not hard to argue that cleanish, inhabitable place is a basic right. This observation revisits Doherty's ending observation that politics is not reducible to elections; it also extends the political nature of infrastructure beyond its deployment in legitimating rhetoric. Starting from people's desires for a clean town, we can argue, against neoliberal ideas, that public infrastructure should be understood as a commons. The law scholar Brett Frischmann advances this tack by defining infrastructure as "a large-scale physical resource made by humans for public consumption," or more simply, "a shared means to many ends" (Frischmann 2012:3–4). Such an approach meshes with Doherty's commitment to participatory politics. Functional infrastructures such as waste management make for more hospitable spaces for encounter. They help create the "convivial city," to use Lisa Peattie's classic phrase (Peattie 1998), in ways that enable an unintended range of relations, beyond normative (Wilson 2016).

Cleaning has served as a technique for world-making in colonial territories, settler societies, and latterly in postcolonial developmentalist states. Scholars of infrastructure will welcome

this account of Kampala's "maintenance space," which whets one's appetite for understanding more about how norms, institutions, people, and matter get assembled, and rearranged, in the streets of a specific city.

Reply

Two kinds of vehicles make the new Kampala Capital City Authority visible on Kampala's streets. First, there are the massive, brightly colored, slow-moving trash trucks that weave their way through neighborhoods, stopping to collect garbage and shipping it out of town to the city's landfill. Second, there are the far more nimble pickup trucks, painted white, yellow, or green, that descend quickly, as if out of nowhere, releasing crews of yellow-shirted enforcement officers (many hired from the large number of young men recently returned from Iraq, where they had been working as security contractors via private recruitment agencies), who arrest ambulant vendors, street-side traders, and other deemed to be in violation of trade order regulations, impounding their goods and equipment in the pickup trucks' beds. The aim of this article is to consider the relationship between the two forms of municipal work embodied in these vehicles, and to describe the distinct but entangled politics, normativities, and aesthetics that inform them. I am grateful to Emily Brownell, Rosalind Fredericks, Claudia Gastrow, António Tomás, and Ara Wilson for their careful readings and responses that generously extend, situate, and critically reflect on these questions.

Emily Brownell situates a discourse on maintenance within a settler colonial infrastructure of feeling in which a pothole is never just a pothole, but an index of creeping barbarism. Racist fears of "infrastructural recidivism," she writes, "acted first as justifications and later nostalgia for colonial rule." Observing the power and the persistence of this infrastructure of feeling was one of the more unsettling aspects of my fieldwork in Kampala. Sepia-toned images of colonial Kampala circulated in national newspapers and chain emails as critical comments on the failures of the present. Around the fiftieth anniversary of Uganda's independence, columnists asked if the queen should come back to fix the country's ailing infrastructures. Several garbage collectors queried whether the litter on the streets was evidence of some kind of national or racial inadequacy: "You know, Jacob, we Africans cannot do that sorting [of recyclables] that you have there." I recall these encounters as unsettling not simply because they upend the anthropologist's desire to find resistance and subversion, but because they so precisely articulate the ongoing settler logic of post-colonial urban development imagined as a process of overcoming and eradicating some essential Africanness. Potholes have other possibilities though. It is not rare for Kampalans to stage protests against municipal neglect by staging the act

of fishing from the city's large and flooded potholes, symbolically enacting the creeping return of the bush and of village ways of life to the heart of the city as a means to critique the everyday discomforts produced by the state's uneven distribution of maintenance.

Ara Wilson observes that even this dramatized mode of critique, however, "is directed at failures to realize what was promised," rather than challenging the terms of the technocratic promise itself. The KCCA's political project lies in expanding the definition of cleanliness beyond the promise of universally desired garbage collection, beautification, and road repair, to include much more contentious forms of ordering such as crackdowns on street vendors, on motorcycle taxi drivers, on squatter settlements, and, paradoxically, on small-scale garbage collectors. The aesthetics of governmentality do indeed extend beyond waste management to "penetrate into wider decisions regarding housing and economic activities" (Fredericks). What was striking about the first years of the KCCA was how literal the aesthetic cleaning project was, the fact that garbage itself emerged as the administration's first agenda item, that collecting rubbish was its foundational act. From here, the process of urban upgrading and maintenance can more broadly be interpreted as a mode of waste management, and of waste production, constituting informal livelihoods as matter out of place in the new regime. But of course, for low-income Kampalans, these forms of life are not dirt but vital sources of livelihoods and services, the basis of urban inhabitation. Cleanliness may be broadly popular, but so are the uses of disorder. While the KCCA casts these crackdowns and displacements as apolitical and technocratic—the political versus technocratic schema being a set of "local" categories that happens to echo a famous phrase in the critical anthropology of development—those affected read them as predatory occasions for bribery or as signs of the disregard with which they are held and the disposability they endure.

Alongside Wilson's identification of the desire for a clean town as a starting point for the demand "that public infrastructure should be understood as a commons" then, I would add the recognition that commons are messy and that urban hospitality might require a certain degree of comfort with relations both unintended and disorderly. The actually existing practices of disorder are one place to locate, in Gastrow's words, "where and how democratic demands are being expressed outside of recognizable registers of rights and institutions." This is especially helpful because it refuses the narrow conceptualization of politics—as electoral maneuvering, individual grandstanding, and vote-seeking patronage—shared by KCCA, the Kampala media, and popular usage, that gives politics only to politicians. Who else, then, might make democratic demands?

Small-scale garbage collectors are good example. As in many other cities, they use specifically designed and crafted hand-powered equipment to move through the narrow streets of low-income settlements to collect residents' rubbish at low rates. They do not look modern—let alone in keeping with

world-class aesthetics—but they get the job done, serving communities that private firms cannot profitably reach and where the municipal government cannot afford to collect frequently enough. As Brownell points out, such routine maintenance practices require us to rethink the history of technology and infrastructure and to expand notions of expertise. The waste stream emerges here as a kind of common resource from which small-scale rubbish collectors, and other collectors such as plastic recyclers, can earn a living. Their work is hard, hazardous, underpaid, and, increasingly, criminalized. During a recent visit to Kampala, I observed how in the name of ordering the waste sector these practices are being squeezed out as access to waste becomes subject to more stringent territorial regulations devised to facilitate public-private partnerships between the KCCA and highly capitalized collection companies. While small-scale collectors are broadly successful in mobilizing their labor and relationships to earn a living by removing rubbish from households, without further infrastructural support they have nowhere to dispose of the waste they gather and often resort to dumping in wetlands. Instead of eradicating these collectors in the name of environmental protection, what would waste infrastructure look like if it incorporated these heterogeneous practices, constructing waste infrastructure as a participatory, messy, commons? A wetland dumpsite may not be a traditional venue to express a democratic demand, but it materializes the existence of alternatives to, or at least wrinkles within, technocratic authoritarianism.

Such efforts are underway in Brazil, India, Ethiopia, South Africa, and elsewhere, attesting to the broader possibilities of waste management to generate multiple modes of governance and political authority beyond top-down technocracy. Even so, without efforts to build collectors' power, these systems simply manage precarity and disposability, rather than challenging it. Often sponsored by the same bottling companies that profit from the production of massive amounts of drain-clogging plastic, they give neoliberalism a green gloss. Jane Guyer's (2007) reflections on the "evacuation of the temporal frame of the near future" (409) are apropos here. There seems to be little middle ground between, on the one hand, an immediate politics debating whether to arrest small-scale garbage collectors or to give them gum boots, and on the other, the clean, smart, world city of the distant future, present in architectural renderings and fantastical master plans (Watson 2014). In the absence of "contestation and alternative imaginations" (Gastrow) addressed to the near future, the widespread desires provoked by aesthetic renderings of distant futures operate as a form of "cruel optimism" (Berlant 2011), attachment to a future that erodes and undermines one's place in the present.

As Frederick's work has shown, while the "specific materiality of the different kinds of trash" matters greatly, the vitality of urban waste infrastructures is not an inherent and ahistorical property of "things-in-themselves," but the outcome of relationships and systems that configure garbage, machines, human bodies, and political power in particular ways in specific places and times. Frederick is right to emphasize the

power of labor in infrastructure and in maintenance. Experiments in incorporating small-scale collectors into official systems illustrate that it is not only who is doing the dirty work that matters, but also how these workers engage with one another and with the divergent regional traditions of collective organization and action. For example, Fredericks has described how the history of Set/Setal in Dakar, a youth-initiated movement of urban cleaning in the late 1980s that inscribed critiques of the municipal neglect engendered by structural adjustment onto the surfaces of the city, creates a precedent for contemporary forms of activism and arts of citizenship engaging waste. The precedents are different in Kampala, where, as Brownell reminds us, cleaning has been entangled with predatory regimes such as Idi Amin's, where the dirt and disorder under scrutiny included not just litter, but also political dissidents, women's bodies, and racialized others deemed parasitic on the nation. However, an alternate Ugandan past, more suggestive for producing belonging through waste, exists in the history of the cooperatives movement that, despite having been co-opted by the Amin regime, provides one model of possibility for configuring waste, workers, capital, and authority in new and more mutualistic and democratic ways.

António Tomás emphasizes that all "social practices were embedded in History," highlighting the presence of multiple sovereigns in the city as one of the deep structures explaining the production of space in contemporary Kampala. Kampala is home not only to the Buganda Kingdom. As well as the Kingdom, Kampala hosts a proliferation of authorities at multiple scales: from the churches, hospitals, and universities perched on the city's hilltops to the ministries, banks, international financial institutions, and nongovernmental organizations settled on its hillsides. Indeed, as Tomás writes, it is precisely the foreignness of the municipal state, and its existence alongside these other, often far more popular, modes of authority that makes legitimacy and the production of authority a problem for the KCCA. The KCCA and environmental NGOs have, in fact, tried to graft themselves onto Ganda structures of political authority through waste. Citing the tradition of *Bulungi Bwansi* (for the good of the country), a Ganda tradition of communal labor for the benefit of the kingdom, they beat drums to call out *Sagala Agalamidde* (I don't want people lying down) to call on citizens (often those who need services the most, as Brownell points out) to clean their own neighborhoods. That this problem of political authority is addressed through the everyday work of maintenance, however, does not contradict its structural nature. On the contrary, one of the central contributions of anthropological analyses of infrastructure is the methodological impetus to attend to quotidian material practices that disclose the ways in which "deep structures" take everyday form in and are reproduced, sometimes with a difference, through cities' technical systems and built environments. Thus, the everyday emerges not purely as a source of ephemeral and contingent practices, but as an outcome of and a site of contestation of histories. Even so, paying attention to the routine work of maintenance reveals that historical structures are never complete, always partial, and

ever in need of repair, and that these repairs themselves make a difference.

—Jacob Doherty

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